

October 22, 2018

DOH-PINELLAS URGES PREVENTION AND VACCINATION FOR HEPATITIS A

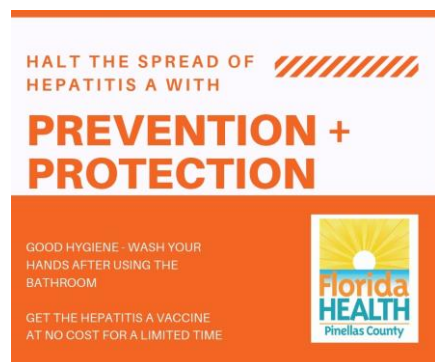


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The Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County (DOH-Pinellas) is recommending prevention and vaccination to combat a rise in hepatitis A cases in the county as well as in nearby areas of the state.

As of Oct. 22, 58 cases have been reported in Pinellas and more than 180 in Florida. Similar increases have been reported in other states.

"We are on track to report the highest number of hepatitis A cases since 2005," said DOH-Pinellas Director Dr. Ulyee

Choe. "We have enhanced our public health efforts in encouraging prevention to reduce new cases, but those at risk need to know that there's an effective vaccine that protects them from this disease."

As part of its public health mission, DOH-Pinellas is offering the two-dose hepatitis A vaccine at no cost to adults and children. The usual \$70.66 cost for adults is waived to remove the barrier of cost; vaccines are always provided at no cost to children and teens through the age of 18. No appointments are needed to get the vaccine at these centers:

- St. Petersburg: 205 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. St. N.
- Pinellas Park: 6350 76th Ave. N.
- Mid-County (Largo): 8751 Ulmerton Rd.
- Clearwater: 310 N. Myrtle Ave.
- Tarpon Springs: 301 S. Disston Ave.

Hepatitis A is spread person-to-person via feces contaminated with its virus. For example, food prepared by an infected person who doesn't practice proper hygiene in handwashing could sicken others.

Symptoms include fever, dark urine, yellow-tinged skin or eyes, fatigue and gastric issues. It causes damage to the liver, especially among those who already have liver disease.

(more)

Good hygiene to prevent the spread of hepatitis A—washing hands well after a bathroom visit and after changing diapers—lessens the chance that fecal contamination will spread the disease in those who have it. Vaccination is the best protection for those at risk.

Go to www.PinellasHealth.com or call (727) 824-6900 for information about DOH-Pinellas. Follow us on Twitter @HealthyPinellas.

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